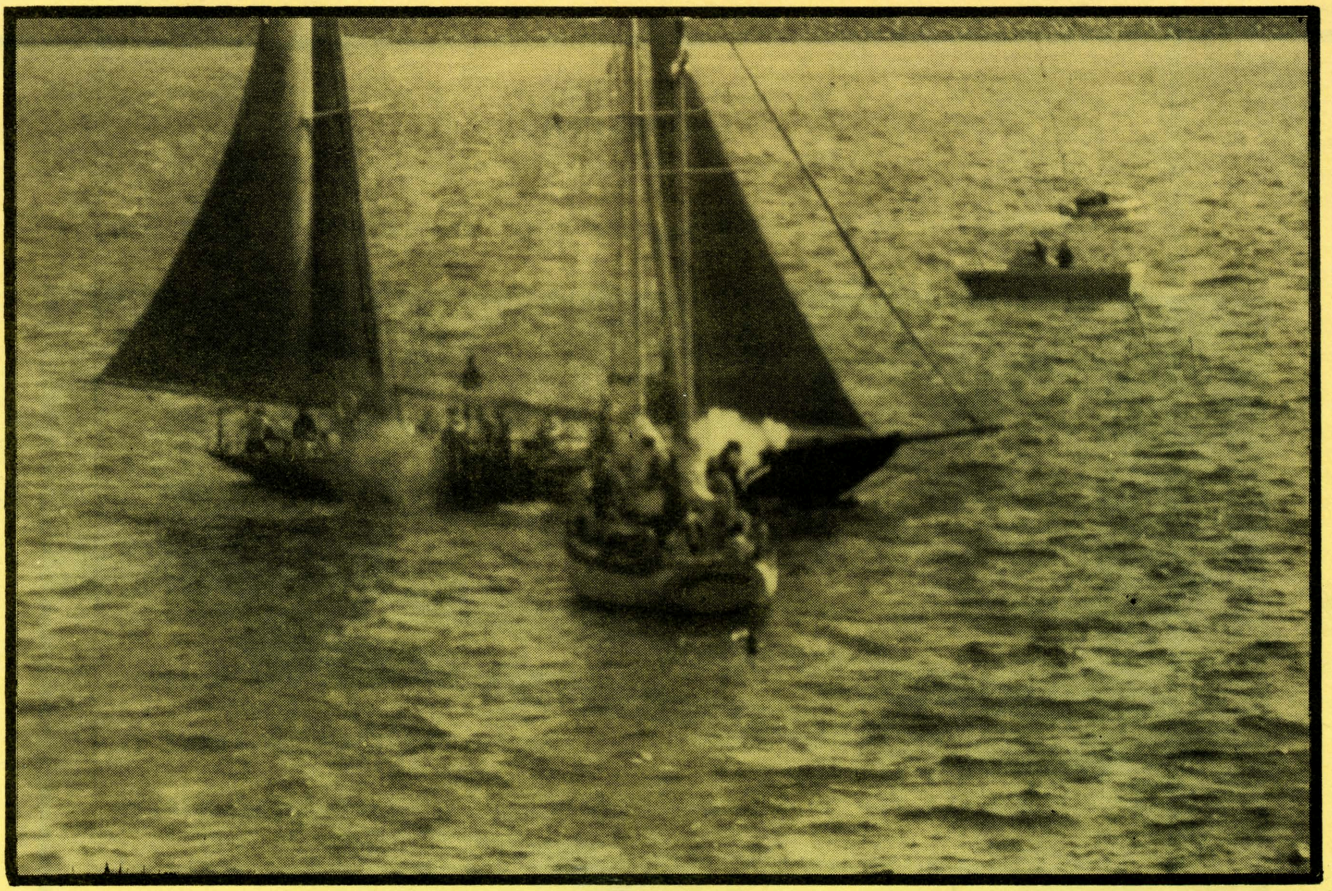


Photo by Presto Press

NATHANIEL POPE DAY

MAY 17, 1975

CELEBRATING THE 200th ANNIVERSARY OF

The First Naval Engagement

MAY 14,1775

Fairhaven, Mass.

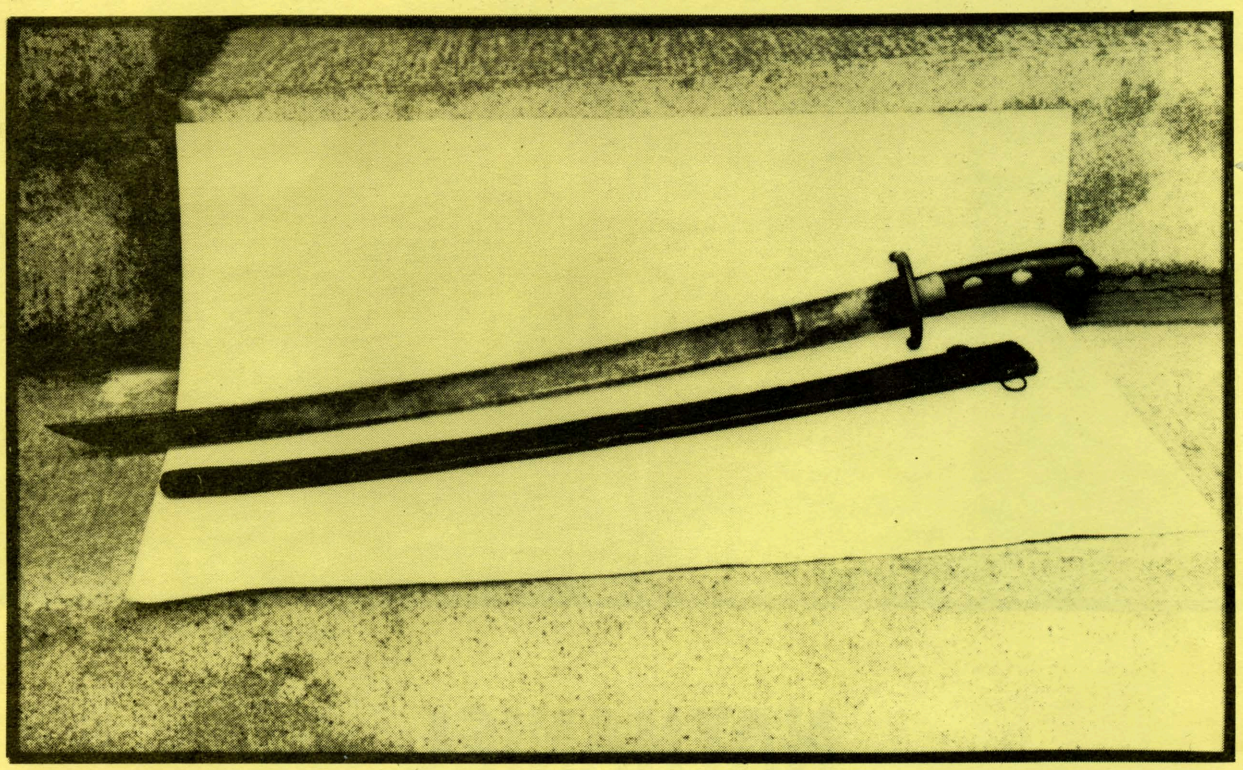


Photo by Clement Daley

Sword of the British Commander captured by Captain Nathaniel Pope at the first naval engagement of the Revolutionary War.

Property of the Pope Family
On exhibit at
The Millicent Library
Fairhaven, Massachusetts

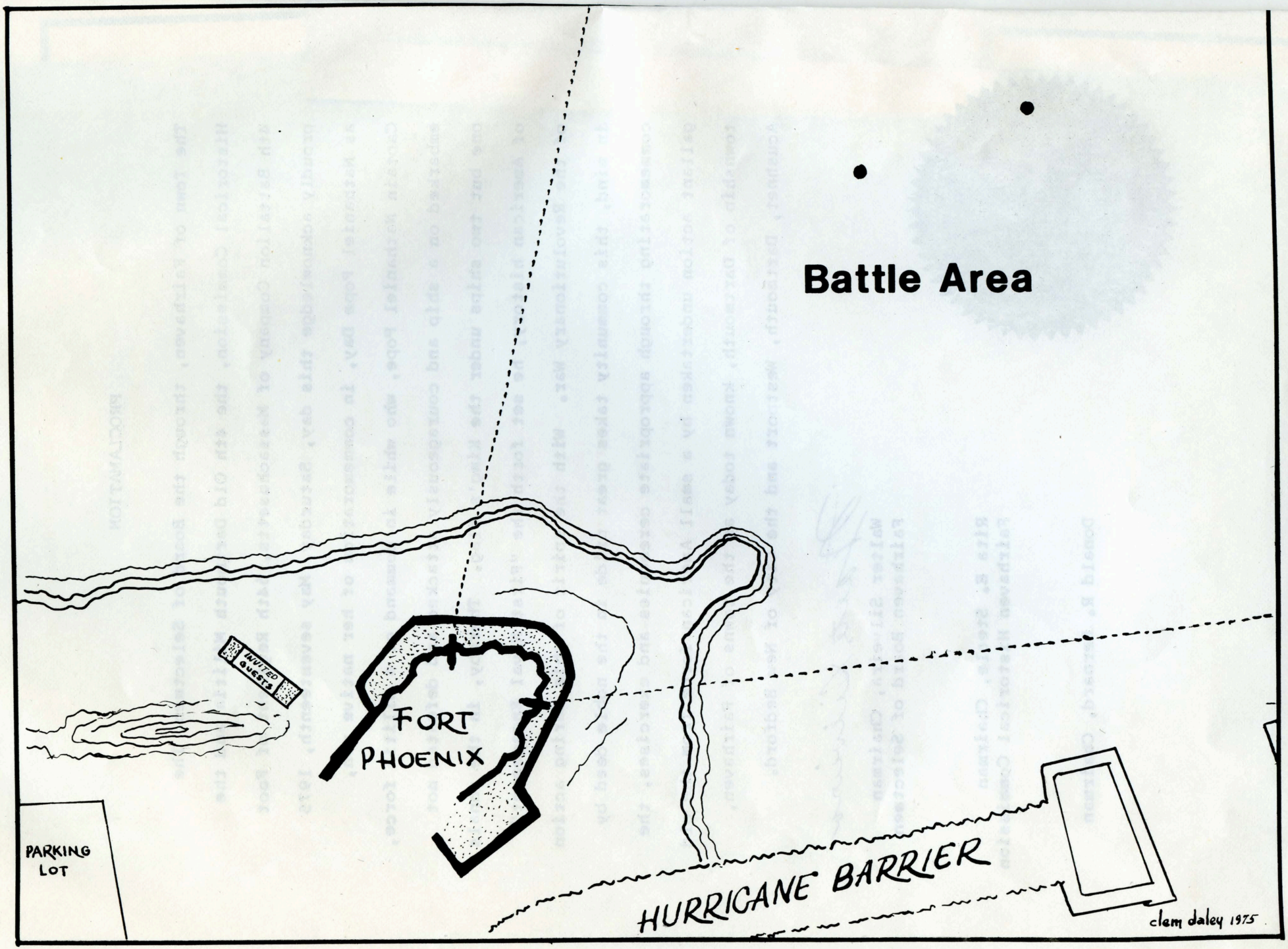
PROCLAMATION

The Town of Fairhaven, through the Board of Selectmen, The Historical Commission, the 4th Old Dartmouth Militia and the 4th Battalion Company of Massachusetts, 64th Regiment of Foot proudly acknowledge this day, Saturday, May seventeenth, 1975 as Nathaniel Pope Day, in commemoration of her native son, Captain Nathaniel Pope, who while in command of a militia force, embarked on a ship and courageously attacked and defeated not one but two ships under the King's flag. Thereby, in the annals of American history, he set forth the "First Naval Engagement" of the Revolutionary War. With the spirit of this daring action in mind, this community takes great pride in the noble deed by commemorating through appropriate ceremonies and exercises, the gallant action undertaken by a small American force from the old township of Dartmouth, known today as the towns of Fairhaven, Acushnet, Dartmouth, Westport and the City of New Bedford.

Walter Silveira, Chairman
Fairhaven Board of Selectmen

Rita E. Steele, Chairman
Fairhaven Historical Commission

Donald R. Bernard, Chairman


Battle Area
INVITED GUESTS
FORT PHOENIX
PARKING LOT
HURRICANE BARRIER
clem daley 1975

NATHANIEL POPE DAY

May 17, 1975

Fairhaven, Massachusetts

12:30 p.m.	Officers Call (Colonial Officers only) The Millicent Library
1:00 p.m.	Muster all Colonial Troops as Honor Guard
1:15 p.m.	Raising of colors. The Millicent Library
1:30 p.m.	Presentation of Regimental Flag to 4th Battalion, 64th Regiment
1:45 p.m.	Opening Address. Old Pope House Walter Silveira, Chairman, Fairhaven Board of Selectmen Rita E. Steele, Chairman, Fairhaven Historical Commission William Q. MacLean, Majority Whip of the Massachusetts House of Representatives Gerry E. Studds, U. S. Congressman from the 12th District Lawrence Pope
2:00 p.m.	Raise Colonial Colors at Pope House Musket salute, 4th Old Dartmouth Militia Fife and Drum selection
2:15 p.m.	Parade to Fort Phoenix via William Street to Fort Street to Fort Phoenix
2:30 p.m.	Flag raising ceremony of Colonial Colors at Fort Phoenix by attending veterans' organizations
2:45 p.m.	Introduction of invited guests
2:55 p.m.	Firing of Fairhaven's historic cannon. Commander Alfred Saulnier, Navy Club of New Bedford
3:00 p.m.	Fife and Drum selection
3:05 p.m.	Firing of Fort Phoenix seacoast cannon signaling commencement of the First Naval Battle re--enactment
3:30 p.m.	Surrender of British Commander's sword to Captain Nathaniel Pope
3:45 p.m.	Concluding exercises. Dismiss the troops
12 noon - 2:30 p.m.	Continuous slide presentation in the magazine at Fort Phoenix. No charge.

FIRST NAVAL ENGAGEMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

May 14, 1775

Twenty-five days after the "Shot heard round the world," an incident of significant importance was to transpire within the limits of Buzzards Bay on the Massachusetts southern coastline. This incident, which involved more than a score of local men, was to constitute the "first" armed naval action of the Revolutionary War. The facts pertaining to this incident have been recorded as follows:

In May, 1775, the Supreme British Commander in America, General Thomas Gage, from his headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts, directed the H.M.S. Falcon, a sixteen-gun ship of the line under the command of Captain Linzee, to cruise south primarily to Buzzards Bay in the vicinity of Martha's Vineyard. The Falcon's mission was to search and seize enough sheep and cattle to satisfy the needs of his army, quartered in and around Boston. The Falcon was very successful in her mission, especially at Martha's Vineyard. The live-stock was loaded aboard several barges and directed to return to Boston while the Falcon continued the search farther south toward Vineyard Sound. The British raider, while cruising the watch, intercepted two unsuspecting merchant ships. One of these carried papers of registration from Sandwich, Massachusetts while the other was registered with the town of Wareham, Massachusetts. Fleeced of their cargo by the Falcon, Captain Linzee then placed a limited crew aboard both the vessels while he continued his search for other ships of prey. It was the British Commander's intention to use the captured ships as decoys in order to intercept more ships in the same manner as of the first encounter.

On Saturday afternoon, the thirteenth of May, 1775, two companies of militia were parading for drill in an open field in Fairhaven (near Fort Phoenix). In command of these two companies, which numbered twenty-five men each, were Captains Nathaniel Pope and Daniel Edgery. Suddenly, an excited rider was seen approaching from an easterly direction at full speed. Leaping from his panting gelding, he confronted the company Commanders with the news that a ship, harboring a British crew with devious intentions was standing off Black Rock, near the end of Sconticut Neck, as a decoy ready to plunder any innocent vessel that might stray within her grasp. The informer was an owner of one of the decoyed ships. Captains Pope and Edgery quickly envisioned an opportunity to display their inner feelings of contempt and hostility to British authority by formulating a plan of retaliation toward the captured vessels. Their plan of attacking the anchored ships was explained in detail to the paraded militiamen.

The vessel to be used to carry out this daring plan was an old 40-ton sloop named the "Success" which was laying to at the old South Wharf (now Kelley's Boat Yard). It was decided that this vessel could only harbor about twenty-five men in her hold, and so it was agreed that twenty-five volunteers from the overall fifty would be selected to carry out the plan. Captain Pope presented the men with a call for the limited number of volunteers and the entire formation stepped forward. They then had to be selected by chance and they were sworn to secrecy of the nature of the

plans so as not to alert the Tories, numerous,especially in Bedford Village.

The remainder of the day and well into the night was spent in readying the "Success" for her challenge to English authority. An old rusty swivel-gun was found . It had no trunions still it was able to command respect and it was lashed to a timber-head which would serve as the main battery for the rebel ship. Shortly after mid-night, the "Success" was swept from the inner harbor unnoticed in search of the decoyed vessel. At dawn's first light, the anchored British vessel was noticed lazily swinging about her anchor cable a short distance south of Black Rock. As the morning sunshine pierced the wispy rising fog which shrouded the southern-most tip of the Fairhaven shore, a Royal Marine and sailor were seen on the deck of the anchored ship. As the "Success" slowly drifted closer, the marine was brought to the rail in a concerned move. Captain Pope and the drummer-boy were the only persons visible on deck. Captain Edgery and his twenty-five crew were well hidden below deck. The marine then shouted his hail to Captain Pope, "Sheer off, you'll be into us," was his cry. Captain Pope replied, "Aye-aye." Yet the "Success" drifted closer. This brought a second hail from the now excited marine, "Sheer-off, sheer-off, I say." Again Captain Pope answered "Aye-aye."

Suddenly Captain Pope signalled the drummer boy to roll his drum, the signal to Captain Edgery and his men to charge forward for action. The bewildered marine suddenly realized the nature of things, dropped his musket and seized an axe to cut the anchor cable. His companion, the sailor raced to the bowsprit to loosen the jib ties. The Americans quickly stormed the anchored vessel and made prisoners of the entire crew before they had time to realize what had transpired.

Captured in that eventful encounter were eleven officers and men, all armed and ready for rough work. Captain Edgery and a number of his men took charge of the ship and directed her to the inner harbor and the "Success and her crew stood off to the west in search of other such decoys.

A second vessel was discovered in Clark's Cove on the Bedford side and it was making ready for sail. Captain Pope then directed the bow of the "Success" in line with the decoy ship. Now under full sail, she positioned herself ready for action. As the two ships closed in, Captain Pope ordered the swivel-gun fired. It being old and still loyal to the King, at the first firing it kicked out of the tracers and bolted overboard. Nevertheless, the "Success" continued to press the action. The British commander, wearing the livery of the King, was seen bobbing in and out of the companion way in hopes of avoiding the patriots' shots. Captain Pope hailed to Shockley, a minuteman, to direct his fire in that direction. The shot soon found its mark by piercing the skull-line of the English Captain, dropping him wounded to the deck. Both ships were then grappled together as the fierce fighting continued. Soon the British ship struck her colors and the battle was ended.

Because of this daring action by Captains Pope and Edgery and their gallant courageous crew, they constituted the "First" naval engagement of the Revolutionary War on May 14, 1775.

Donald R. Bernard

FAIRHAVEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Walter Silveira, Chairman William H. Perry Kenneth M. Wood Jr.

FAIRHAVEN HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Rita E. Steele, Chairman Milton K. Delano Elizabeth I Hastings
Chester Hathaway Walter Silveira Donald R. Bernard
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Blanche Haydon George Coleman Anthony Catojo, Jr.

4TH OLD DARTMOUTH MILITIA

Captain Francis Corriea Lt. George Coleman

4TH BATTALION CO. OF MASS.
64th Regiment of Foot (Fairhaven Company)

Captain Donald R. Bernard Lt. William Ratcliff

Attending Colonial Units

ANCIENT AND HONOURABLE BRISTOL BRIGADE

Brigadier General Clair Carpenter

64TH REGIMENT OF FOOT (HDQ)

The Honourable Colonel Fred Wahl, National Commander

MASSACHUSETTS COLONIAL NAVY, FALL RIVER

Commodore Normand Futoransky

APPONAGANSETT VOLUNTEERS, DARTMOUTH

Captain Frank Medeiros

TAUNTON COLONIAL MINUTEMEN

Captain William Cummings

WAREHAM MINUTEMEN

Major John Fearing

INDEPENDENT LIGHT DRAGOONS

Colonel Robert Taylor

11TH MASSACHUSETTS CONTINENTALS

Captain William Cummings

This Nathaniel Pope Day Program Would Not Have Been Made Possible Without The Generous Assistance of the Following:

Fairhaven Board of Selectmen	Sponsor
Fairhaven Historical Commission	Sponsor (planning)
4th Old Dartmouth Militia	Sponsor (pageant)
4th Battalion Company, 64th Regiment	Sponsor (pageant)
The Millicent Library	Program/refreshments
Fairhaven Board of Public Works	Equipment/facilities
Fairhaven Fire Department	Equipment/safety boat
Fire Chief Arthur Paquette	Safety Officers
Lt. William Ordiorne	Safety Officers
Fairhaven Police Department	Law enforcement
Fairhaven Civil Defense, Charles Jones, Director	Traffic control coordinator
Fairhaven Harbor Master	Waterfront traffic control
Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Recreation Department
United States Coast Guard	Waterfront Assistance
Fairhaven Marine Co.	Docking facilities
New Bedford Standard-Times	Publicity
Radio Station WBSM	Planning and pageant coverag
Radio Station WNBH	Publicity
WTEV-TV Channel 6	Publicity
Bristol County Development Council, Inc.	Publicity/advertisement
State Representative William Q. MacLean	
Mr. Chester Hathaway	Pageant preparation
Fairhaven Historical Society	Awards assistance
Fairhaven Coast Guard Auxiliary	Boat safety
City of New Bedford	Equipment Assistance
Clement Daley	Programming/art work
Mattapoisett Presto Press, Donald Jason	Publicity/coverage
Mattapoisett Rescue Squad	Traffic control
New Bedford Civil Defense - Auxiliary police	Traffic control
Dartmouth Emergency Radio Assistance Club	Communications
Fairhaven Whalers Skin Diving, New Bedford	Pageant participation
Fairhaven High School Printing Dept.	Printing

Ships:

"Seven Bells" (American) Captain Ike Harter, Nantucket, Mass. This vessel with auxiliary/sail has played the role of the American ship "Success" for the past three years. She has sailed several times to Europe is 60 feet in length overall with a 13½ foot beam and is ketch rigged. Weights approximately 23 tons.

"Black Pearl" (British) Captain Barclay "Buzzy" Warburton, Newport, Rhode Island. This vessel, rigged as a hermaphrodite brig, measures approximately 51 feet in length, with a 15½ foot beam and draws 8 feet. She was the only privately owned vessel not under the government to take part in the "Race of the Tall Ships" from England to Denmark in 1972. Her owner/skipper is president of the American Sail Training Association.

"Amber Jack" (British, anchored) Captain Edward Yeomans, Jr. of Westport. She is Alden designed and schooner rigged. Built in 1924 in Thompson, Maine, 51 feet overall, 11.3 beam, draws 6.2 feet and has won the Gloucester Schooner Race twice and will challenge the Canadian Champion schooner this summer off Nova Scotia.

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR CANNON

On February 11, 1777, the American warship "Alfred", 28 guns, under Commodore Ezekiel Hopkins, sailed from Delaware Bay with a squadron of ships in search of English vessels of prey. On board the "Alfred" on that fateful cruise was a young junior officer named John Paul Jones. Later, he was to embellish himself in the annals of naval history as the bold and saucy privateer captain who served with such courage and distinction that he earned himself the title "father" of the mighty United States navy.

The fleet made havoc of British merchantmen which they encountered on the high seas. The "Alfred" entered the British stronghold at Nassau in the West Indies on March 2, 1777 and captured a large quantity of military stores along with the acting Governor of the Island. The fleet then made sail to return the captured prizes to the American privateer headquarters at New London, Connecticut. They arrived in port on the morning of March 13, 1777.

As the fort in Fairhaven, Massachusetts was nearly completed, several prize British cannon were directed there as protectors of this beautiful harbor. However, a little over twelve months later, a large British force under the command of General Charles Grey (the no-flint general) landed in New Bedford and Fairhaven capturing the small Fairhaven fort. The guns were spiked and their trunions knocked off and left in a useless state.

This cannon, a treasured reminder of that fateful raid, was secured by Captain Nathaniel Pope, of naval battle fame. It was mounted on a carriage, secured with iron straps and placed on duty again at the corner of Union and Water streets as an added measure of protection against the British should they decide to return to this port. There it stayed until some time after the turn of the century when Union Wharf was constructed. It was then placed muzzle downward near the Phoenix block near the head of the walkway leading to the Pope House on Center street; and there it stayed until about 1846 when the church was raised and remodeled into the present Phoenix block. Next it was moved to an empty lot on the corner of Washington and Water streets and next to the residence of Wilson Pope, northeast corner of William and Union streets.

In 1883, through public spirit and the generosity of Captain Alexander Winsor, the gun was again placed at Phoenix corner. In 1950 Center Street was widened and the cannon was moved to the Town Hall lawn, but it later went back to Fort Phoenix where we trust it will remain forever.

In 1974, the Fairhaven Historical Commission working in conjunction with Mr. Arthur Fortier agreed to have a new carriage constructed. Mr. Fortier agreed to build the carriage only if it were the correct and proper cradle for this type of gun. The cannon, as it stands today, is unquestionably a majestic and sobering reminder of the thousands of American lads who paid such a staggering price for the many freedoms we enjoy today.

Donald R. Bernard

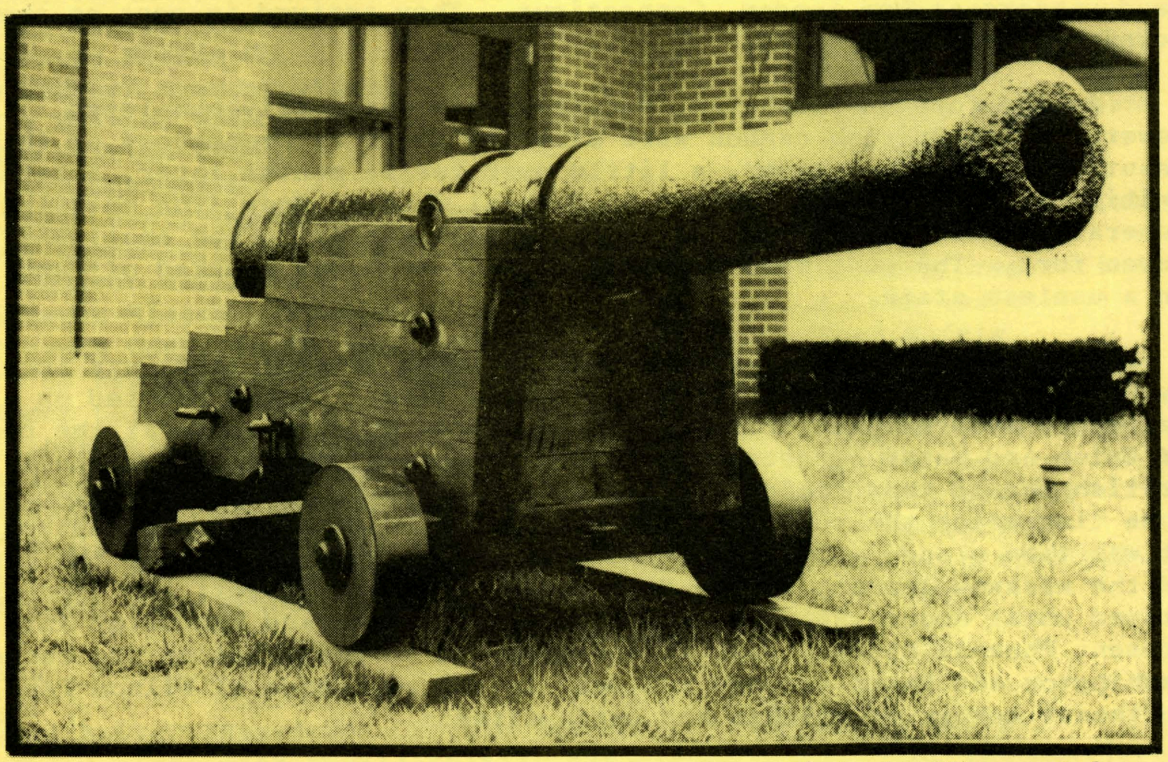

Photo by Clement Daley

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR CANNON